

BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016

The regular meeting for the Board of Selectmen convened at 7:00 in the public meeting room in the Town Office Building at 110 Main Street. In attendance were Dr. Richard M. Smith and Edward S. Harrison. John R. Morrell was absent. Also present were Town Administrator Evan Brassard and the media.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:**

Mr. Harrison made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of February 23, 2016 – open session. Dr. Smith seconded and it was so VOTED.

**Monson Fire Department Paramedic Recognition:**

Monson Fire Chief Laurent McDonald approached the Board of Selectmen to hand out four paramedic recognition certificates. Chief McDonald noted three people recently completed their paramedic training upgrade, and one the fourth person is a firefighter who is already a paramedic who just graduated from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Call Volunteer Firefighting Training Programs.

Chief McDonald presented the certificates to Daniel Hope, Todd LaCosse, and Jennifer Ashe. Andrew Nothe wasn't able to attend tonight's meeting and his certificate will be presented to him at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Harrison read the awards presented from the Board of Selectmen into the record, and handed them to these individuals as well.

Mr. Harrison congratulated the paramedics for their persistence in pursuing this wonderful achievement.

Dr. Smith thanked them all for doing a great job.

**Monson Fire Department Transfer Policy Update:**

This item was tabled.

**Mary Lane License Consolidation Discussion:**

Mr. Brassard explained he received a letter from Baystate Mary Lane Hospital in Ware stating they are seeking to consolidate the licenses between themselves and Baystate Wing Hospital in Palmer, into just one license.

Mr. Brassard said the impact to Monson is fairly small. Baystate Mary Lane wants to end all of their inpatient services. The ER will stay open, but all the inpatient services will be moved over to Palmer's Baystate Wing Hospital.

Mr. Brassard said our ambulance doesn't run to Baystate Mary Lane very often and most of our residents currently don't go there on their own for treatment. Therefore, the biggest impact to Monson would be due to Baystate Mary Lane being a regional employer.

Mr. Brassard stated the downsizing has a significant impact on the Town of Ware, and the Town has asked Baystate to come to the table to explain their actions; however there is a lack of communication coming out of Baystate.

Mr. Brassard noted he attended the first of the meetings, along with a lot of different officials from surrounding communities as well as Senator Anne Gobi and State Rep. Todd Smola. Mr. Brassard suggested the Town of Monson continue to offer support to the Town of Ware as they fight to keep the doors open at Baystate Mary Lane Hospital, to the largest extent that they can, by writing a letter of support.

Mr. Brassard said his concern would be this is phase one, and that after the inpatient services are gone and they see the numbers might not be as well as they hoped, they might end up closing the entire facility. Mr. Brassard noted if you are on the far side of Ware, it's quite an ambulance ride to Wing in Palmer.

Mr. Harrison said he wonders if there is going to be increased wait times for Monson residents who go to Wing, due to the competition for slots from residents from Ware.

Mr. Brassard responded that's a valid possibility.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to write a letter of support to the Town of Ware. Dr. Smith seconded and it was so VOTED.

Mr. Brassard said he would draft the letter.

#### **Solar Installation Bylaw Change Request:**

Mr. Brassard said we are currently working with a solar developer that is challenging our current bylaw. Mr. Brassard noted currently our town bylaw states you have to have fifty acres or more to put up a solar array. This does not impede our residential home systems.

Mr. Brassard noted the State is pushing for smaller solar installations, as they are realizing the fifty acre tracks of land and 11, 20, etc. megawatts, and very large facilities aren't really environmentally friendly. Therefore the State is pushing for smaller community solar projects that are 2, 3, etc. megawatts; smaller installations that can be done on ten or fifteen acres.

Mr. Brassard suggested the Board of Selectmen send the bylaw request to the Planning Board for review since it's already in our Zoning Bylaw. The Planning Board will work with Town Counsel and draft a change if deemed necessary, to be presented to the residents at a Town Meeting.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to pass this bylaw request on to the Planning Board for their input. Dr. Smith seconded and it was so VOTED.

Mr. Brassard said at the last meeting, the Selectmen spoke about the proposed lighting bylaw and voted to pass the request on to the Bylaw Committee, and in speaking with the Chair Val Beaudoin, Town Planner Dan Laroche, and some other folks, Mr. Brassard said he is recommending rather than have that reviewed by the Bylaw Committee, that this also be sent to the Planning Board. His rationale is all our lighting bylaws are currently housed under the zoning bylaws, plus the Planning Board will have the expertise to handle such a request.

Dr. Smith said he feels this makes sense.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to pass the request for a lighting bylaw change on to the Planning Board and Town Planner to discuss. Dr. Smith seconded and it was so VOTED.

**Nomination of Inspector of Animals:**

Mr. Brassard noted this was done last year as well.

Mr. Harrison made a motion to appoint Wendy LeSage as the Inspector of Animals effective immediately for the year ending April 30, 2017. Dr. Smith seconded and it was so VOTED.

**Monson Police Department Holding Cell Update:**

This was tabled.

**Budget Discussion:**

The Board of Selectmen discussed various aspects of the budget with Mr. Brassard, clarifying some of the questions they had at the previous meeting when Mr. Brassard was out sick.

Mr. Brassard noted Pathfinder will be holding their budget meeting on March 16, 2016 at 7 p.m. Town Accountant Mary Lauria and two members of the Finance Committee will be attending.

With respect to the skate park, Mr. Brassard provided a quick overview stating he is working with Town Planner Dan Laroche on finalizing a few new figures prior to coming to the Board of Selectmen for guidance on how to proceed. Peat was found at the site through some sample digging. Mr. Brassard explained peat is an organic substance that is prone to decay and anything built on top of it sinks or loses elevation.

Mr. Brassard said if no peat is found and you don't hit anything under the ground, you are at about \$75,000 to dig the hole and fill it with the proper foundation. If contaminants are found, you are at about \$185,000 depending on what it is.

Also in digging the hole, they hit urban fill, which is bricks, etc. which can be used as long as it doesn't reach high levels of lead.

Mr. Brassard explained the insurance is paying for the building of the skate park and has offered to pay some money towards the testing and excavation, but we are only talking about \$10,000 on top of what they are already offering, which is a significant amount of money. Mr. Brassard said once they have collected all the data, he will be coming to the Board showing the different options. The different options will be excavate, fill, and deal with the cost; spend a little bit of money and have another skate park designed that is lighter such as asphalt and wood; or find a different spot for it to go.

With respect to the Hillside Building Mr. Brassard said asbestos was found on one of the very large boilers and it is anticipated the other boiler has asbestos in it. In order to get costs on renovation/demolition you need to have funded a study of what is actually on the premises.

Mr. Brassard said he did go to the Finance Committee to request this amount out of the Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Account. The amount requested was \$4,800 and this was approved. This study is all encompassing; they will drill holes in the walls, floors, etc. and he believes this work will be done next week. In a few weeks he will have an idea of what we are looking at and get other costs such as the figure on what renovation values are or costs for demolition, which will be bid processes. Mr. Brassard said he is estimating this at \$50 to \$150 per square foot.

Mr. Brassard stated he is hearing now there is a lot of interest in this site from the Art community, and a community center type of idea, but all of this is going to come down to cost, and noted, it's only speculation on his part, but it might come down to be cheaper to build something else than it is to fix that building as it's in really bad shape. Mr. Brassard noted there are some really spectacular butler style buildings that could be done at fairly low costs.

#### **New Business to Come Before the Board:**

- Mr. Brassard explained today, an Active Shooter training and Automated External Defibrillator training was held and thanked the Monson Police Department who were fantastic, did an excellent job, and were really professional. Mr. Brassard added the training was beyond his expectation, showing how we operate in this building and what we need to be more aware of in our surroundings.

Mr. Brassard and Dr. Smith thanked the public as well for their understanding during the period the building was closed for the training session.

Correspondence was read and completed.

At 8:30 p.m., Mr. Harrison made a motion to adjourn from open session to go into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to non-union personnel pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Sec. 21 (2), and collective bargaining or litigation pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Sec 21 (3), not to return to open session. Dr. Smith seconded and it was so VOTED.

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Edward S. Harrison, Clerk